

Eastern MRS Meeting Notes
February 28, 2007
Wilson County DSS

Counties Present: Beaufort, Cumberland, Franklin, Halifax, Harnett, Hertford, Onslow, Washington, Wayne, Wilson.

Introductions
Announcements
Overview of At Risk Case Management
Duke Update
Services Provided vs. Services Recommended
Family Assessments for Foster Homes
Other Discussion

Announcements

- NCSU - In the process of gathering info on CFT in families with DV and hope to present in DC in June.
- Holly & Patrick have been invited to Ontario to talk to them about how we implemented.
- Upcoming MRS Institute – Aug 27-29

Overview of ARCM

Rick Zechman from the policy team presented on this. Has handouts regarding policy and a powerpoint. Can contact him for more information.

- May not know what this is, it is a resource from the Division of Medical Assistance for adults as well as children.
- Goes well with Services Provided and Services Recommended.
- The organization for this is very different. Some counties have workers that this is all they do.
- Easy eligibility is having a blue Medicaid card – no other color cards will work.
- Specific eligibility is in policy – page 3.
- Can't use this when the children are in foster care. Can use it in some cases of in-home services, but have to be very careful and be able to show a clear difference between what you are using the at-risk case management for that regular in-home services is not doing. (Remember that in-home is defined as a child who is a reasonable candidate for foster care.) Just be sure that you can document the specific reasons for using at-risk case management.
- It is a voluntary services so the family has to sign the 5027. Coded 395 in SIS manual.
- Rick showed an example of an assessment form that was developed my Medicaid – counties have been using this as a guide and making ones specific to their counties.
- We are doing this in partnership with Division of Aging and Adult Services so there may be other requirements for adults.
- The powerpoint gets into more details regarding documentation and monitoring requirements.
- If your county is not currently doing this, before you try to use it you need to ensure that you are certified to provide it. Most probably are, but there may be some that are not.

- This would be a way to provide services in a Services Recommended case. You don't want to recommend services to a family and then not have any funds to provide these services. So, you could use these funds to provide these services.
- Remember that these services must be 100% voluntary. Cannot use these funds if there are any mandates around the services that you are providing.
- One county said that they can't do it because when they enter the daysheets it won't let them enter 210 if there is a at-risk case open. One other county has had 215 and at-risk open at the same time and they have not have had a problem.

Duke Update

- Are in the process of conducting the focus groups. These are 3 separate groups that include supervisors, workers without supervisors, and community partners. Participation has exceeded their expectations.
- April will be the "consent blitz" month. The Pilot 10 counties will collect consent forms from all families that they interact with during April so that Duke can be doing interviews in April through June.
- Although many counties here are not Pilot 10, for next year Duke will be selecting 10 counties that were not the Pilot ones, so if your county is selected next year this should sound familiar.
- Will be adding a new component. System of Care uses a survey at the end of CFT meetings. They will be adding this survey so that we can gain insight into how well the CFT meetings are working for families.
- Working on a template for the 10 Pilot counties. These are fact sheets that provide county level information compared to the state as a whole.
- Next year they will do these for all 100 counties. Would like to get feedback on the fact sheets this year before they do them for the entire state.

Services Provided vs. Services Recommended

Wanted to have a conversation about how these were being used. Looked at percentages of family assessments that were Services Provided, CPS Services no longer Needed vs. Services Recommended. (this is page 35 of the hard copy of 1408 III D Case Decision.)

- If you have provided services when you frontloaded that were safety related and if you had not provided them the family would have gone to 215, that is Services Provided. If you are providing services that are helpful but are not safety related, that is Services Recommended.
- Is the service/referral **safety** related or not? This is the criteria. If it is, that is Services Provided. If it is not, it is Services Recommended.
- Services Provided, CPS Services no Longer Needed – if you had not made XYZ referrals and they had not followed up, would you have ever sent the case to 215? If not, it is only Services Recommended.

Family Assessments for Foster Homes

People have asked Holly why we treat foster care families differently. Most of these questions have come from foster care licensing folks.

- Some think that they should stay as investigative – family assessments take longer and may be able to wrap up issue sooner with investigative.

- Others think that there should be an option, who should we be more family centered with than our family foster homes?
- If we did family assessments, the Foster Parents would be allowed to bring in their support systems so how would we deal with confidential issues that come up? Foster Parents hold so much confidential information about these children that is not appropriate to share with others.
- If we trust these Foster Parents enough to care for children that have had severe issues in their lives, why don't we trust/respect them enough to give them the more family centered approach?
- Maybe not a higher standard, but we should hold them to a different standard – they have resources that 'regular' families don't have. They went through trainings, they have a Foster Care worker to call when they have concerns, and foster parents support groups. So we have given them more tools from the get-go and that should be taken into consideration.
- Patrick asked if it would affect recruitment and retention of Foster Parents? The best recruiters of new foster parents are current foster parents so would this make current foster parents more likely to continue or encourage others?
 - The biggest concern at MAPP classes is what happens when someone calls in a report on them, how is this handled? These people also have their own biological children.
 - Can't really say because it hasn't happened, but don't see how it could hurt.
- Investigative assessments are not meant to be punitive, but that is how they feel.
- Even if the family is unsubstantiated, we have now put their biological children into the central registry as victim children. (However, they did know that this was an option when they decided to be foster parents.)
- This will also cover kids who are in kinship care but in DSS custody. These issues will also cover Grandma who probably has not been through MAPP, but was chosen as a placement resource by DSS.
 - People felt that if we were including relative caregivers in this, should definitely make a family assessment an option. They do not have all the additional resources and trainings that we mentioned with the licensed foster parents.
- The county DSS needs to also be aware that the foster parents are more vulnerable for reports because so many people (like biological family members, etc.) may have issues with them. They need to be aware of this and handle reports appropriately. Some of the reports are clearly an attempt to set the foster parents up, and the DSS should respond appropriately to those and not initiate an investigation where not really warranted.
- Felt that the cross county issue would complicate the matter.
 - One possibility would be that the receiving county would decide if the report would be accepted or not, and the county that actually did the assessment would be able to choose the track.

Other Issues

Blended Cases – concerns about providing quality 210 and 215 services.

- A worker said she is an assessor – and keeps cases if risk is moderate and this is not working so well. Caseload sizes are within standards. Feels that she is not getting her work done. However, her supervisor was there and said that she is getting things done well and within timeframes.
- Holly has experienced this herself with she was still in the county, and heard this from other counties as well.
- The people who did the case management before feel that they are neglecting their case management when they blend. The people that were assessors feel that they don't know how to do case management.
- It is worker perception that things are not going well because it feels different, but supervisors say that the workers are getting things done.
- For supervisors if you are going to have people doing blended, the biggest single predictor of success is supervisory management of caseloads. These things ebb and flow. Can't just blindly go with the rotation.
- One county has noticed that workers who used to just be assessors and always closed cases within 30 days and were caught up on dictation, etc. are now taking 45 or more days and are very behind on their dictation because of the case management.
- Suggestion to stack yourself for success would be to start with workers who have time management skills as one of their personal strengths.
 - This is going to be hard anyway, but if you have people that are enthusiastic about it to begin with, that is better, and also people that can handle the 2 types of work more easily. This will show others that it can work, and also give people who were more enthusiastic about it a chance to try out what works and what doesn't and then pass along successes to people who are maybe less excited about blending.

Issues between family and investigative assessors

- Workers who do only investigative assessments feel superior to those that do family assessments in one county. Wanted to know if other counties had this issue.
- Yes, some of them have.

Changing tracks

- Wayne county wanted to know if Beaufort could share their form they filled out. Also, how most other counties documented this, because they just include the discussion and decision in the record, but not specific form.
- The Documentation Workgroup has included this is the documentation they are working on.
- Jeff pointed out that what Beaufort has done is set up a way to document worker/supervisor conferences. This has made or broken many counties in a CFSR.

Future Meetings:

Eastern: April 26th Cumberland County

Eastern: May 22nd Martin County

Eastern: July 18th Edgecombe County